

In the claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of storing and transporting drilling waste produced in an offshore drilling operation, the method comprising the steps of:
providing a moveable container of adjustable buoyancy for receiving drilling waste;
securing the container [in a position below sea level];
connecting the container to a drilling platform or vessel; and
conveying drilling waste from the platform or vessel to the container.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
releasing the container from its position; and
transporting the container to a drilling waste recycling facility.
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [1 or]2 wherein at least two containers are provided.
4. (Currently Amended) The method of [any preceding claim]claim 1 further comprising the step of agitating the drilling waste within the container.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the agitation step comprises rotating or otherwise moving the container in the water.
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [5]1 wherein the container is provided with external fins or the like which tend to rotate or move the container in response to sea currents.
7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[any preceding claim] comprising the step of securing the container on position by anchoring the container to the seabed.
8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[any preceding claim] further comprising the step of adjusting the buoyancy of the container, to maintain the container at a substantially constant depth.
9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[any preceding claim] comprising the step of releasably fixing the container to the sea floor.
10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[any preceding claim] further comprising the step of conveying drilling waste to a smaller volume holding tank on the platform, prior to conveying the waste to the container.
11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[any preceding claim] comprising the step of macerating the drilling waste prior to conveying the waste to the container.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[any preceding claim] further comprising the step of determining selected parameters of the waster prior and then adjusting said parameters before conveying the waste to the container.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[any preceding claim] further comprising the step of adding oil to the drilling waste prior to conveying waste to the container.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[any preceding claim] further comprising the step of agitating the contents of the container whilst the container is transported to a treatment facility.

15. (Original) The method of any preceding claim further comprising the steps of:
providing an additional container; and
maintaining at least one container at the platform vessel.

16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for use in storage and transport of drilling waste, the apparatus comprising a moveable container of adjustable buoyancy for containing drilling waste; securing means for releasably securing the container [in a position below sea level], and connection means for connecting the container to a drilling platform or vessel.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the securing means comprises an anchor means to be attached to the sea bed.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the anchor means comprises a base to be located on the seabed, configured so as to receive and retain at least one container.

19. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of [any one of claims 16-18]claim 17 wherein the container comprises agitation means, to enable the contents of the container to be agitated.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the agitation means comprises an internal rotating paddle.

21. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 19[claims 19 or 20] wherein the agitation means comprises external fins mounted on the container, such that the container rotates in response to sea currents.

22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of [any one of claims 16-21] claim 16 wherein the container comprises a double skin, with a cavity between the skins which may be filled with air or sea water as desired, in order to adjust buoyancy.

23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of [any one of claims 16 to 22]claim 16 wherein the connection means comprises a flexible conduit for conveying drilling waste.

24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein a plurality of flexible conduits are provided.
25. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of [any one of claims 16 to 24]claim 16 further comprising a holding tank for holding drilling waste prior to conveying the waste to the container.
26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of [any one of claims 16 to 25]claim 16 further comprising a macerator.
27. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of [any one of claims 16 or 26]claim 16 further including means for determining selected parameters of drilling waste.
28. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of [any one of claims 16 to 27]claim 16 further comprising means for adding oil to the drilling waste.
29. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the container is made of flexible fabric.
30. (New) The method of claim 16 wherein the container is made from flexible fabric.
31. (New) An apparatus for use in storage and transport of drilling waste, the apparatus comprising a moveable container of adjustable buoyancy for containing drilling waste, the container having agitation means so as to allow the contents of the container to be agitated; securing means for releaseably securing the container, and connection means for connecting the container to a drilling platform or vessel.
32. (New) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the agitation means is an internal rotating paddle.